

Memorandum

TO : DCI
VLA : DD/I

DATE: 15 June 1963

FROM : AD/RE

SUBJECT: Memo: "Possible Soviet Reactions to US Disarmament Proposals"

This memorandum is in response to your request for comments related to the preparation of new US disarmament proposals as directed by NSAM 239. We have included in the first several paragraphs some general comments on the Soviet view of disarmament.

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

14 June 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Possible Soviet Reactions to US Disarmament Proposals

1. Because an agreement to cease nuclear testing has acquired major importance as a symbolic political act, it would be difficult in the present context to move on to further significant advances in the field of disarmament and arms control without first having concluded a test ban agreement. The outcome of the July talks in Moscow on this narrower subject will both provide evidence on Soviet intentions in the disarmament field as a whole and determine what further movement is possible on broader measures. New proposals after agreement on a test ban treaty would presumably be made in a significantly improved international atmosphere and Soviet receptivity would probably be increased. If the test ban negotiations fail, however, the Soviets would almost certainly charge the West with the full responsibility and for some time would not give serious consideration to further US proposals on arms control or disarmament that did not include important concessions to

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Soviet positions. Such concessions, however, might encourage the Soviets to believe that they could adopt an even harder stand not only in relation to disarmament but on other contentious political issues as well.

2. The Sino-Soviet negotiations which begin before the test ban talks, but are likely to be protracted, could be an important factor in Khrushchev's view of the conversations with the US and UK. Chinese opposition to any agreements which impose restrictions on their acquisition of nuclear weapons is clear, and the Soviet position on disarmament is bound to be an issue. Conversely, the American attitude in the talks could affect the course of the Sino-Soviet discussions. Khrushchev's choice of a mid-July date for the three power negotiations might even be intended to warn the Chinese that he has the option of serious dealing with the West. Because these two sets of talks may be interrelated, Khrushchev is likely to remain flexible until he is in a position to judge the probable outcome of both negotiations. In addition to the Sino-Soviet quarrel, a complicating factor may be differences within the Soviet leadership on the question of whether it is possible to reach any important agreement with the West and whether the USSR would not be better advised to proceed with new weapons tests.

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General Considerations

3. In general, we do not believe the USSR regards the present period as a favorable one for reaching arms control agreements which would advance Soviet interests. Although it is conceivable that economic pressures will force the USSR to consider political ways of reducing the arms burden, current signs do not point in this direction. Moreover, the underlying assumption of a broad agreement on disarmament or arms control is that the USSR can accept the political status quo as the basis for a detente with the US. Since the Vienna meeting with President Kennedy, Khrushchev has adamantly refused to make such a commitment to detente, and until he does so will be wary of encouraging expectations that major issues can be resolved through agreement with the US.

4. Unless their attitude undergoes a basic change we believe the Soviets will continue to view disarmament primarily as a subject for political agitation to appeal to aspirations for peace and mobilize pressure against Western military measures. This is not to say that the Soviets have no interest in disarmament. They probably still see advantages in certain measures of arms control. They would doubtless count it a significant advance, for example,

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if they could find a means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons or reducing the chances of accidental war. In this respect their interests coincide with those of the US. Their approach to such measures, however, is focused on Europe, and Germany in particular. Thus the Soviets are the most receptive to US disarmament proposals which are heavily overlaid with political issues, especially those affecting the future of NATO armaments. And at any rate, they view the mere discussion of this issue as potentially divisive for the Western Alliance.

5. In the recent past the Soviets have probably not expected the US to offer important concessions to Soviet views; on the contrary, they have been somewhat apprehensive that they were on the defensive and in a weak position in negotiations generally, because of the outcome of the Cuban crisis. They might, however, interpret the recent Western initiatives as reflecting an inordinate need for negotiations with the USSR and as foreshadowing new concessions, particularly since Moscow has displayed little interest in resolving important issues on mutually acceptable terms. Such an interpretation could lead them to conclude that on a number of other issues they could press harder than they have previously calculated.

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each side could choose among various systems for greater or lesser reduction within the overall percentage, there would be an appeal to the Soviets from both a military and economic standpoint. Nevertheless, no such separable first stage plan is likely to be negotiable with the Soviets without some provision for the reduction of US bases and troops abroad, and the Soviets would still oppose the kind of inspection which the West has hitherto thought necessary.

7. The Soviets would probably insist that such an agreement be concluded between NATO and the Warsaw pact rather than bilaterally, in order to prevent a buildup of strategic power by Western Europe. They would be more likely to take such a position if they had decided to opt for relatively greater reductions in their striking forces directed primarily at Europe, so as to achieve a more favorable intercontinental strategic balance between the US and the USSR.

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b. Gradual Approach: The US would make proposals for a gradual approach to disarmament, beginning with token disarmament plus confidence-building measures to demonstrate good faith. The initial steps would also be intended to prepare for subsequent steps involving more comprehensive reductions and intensive inspections of more significant hardware.

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8. Objectively, this approach should appeal to the Soviet leaders more than the comprehensive, multistage plans of both sides. It offers, for example, a relatively simple way to begin a reduction in armaments and create a general political atmosphere conducive to

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25X1 gradually expanding the scope of further reductions. It is a flexible arrangement which could be slowed down or speeded up, and either side need only go as far as it wished since there would be no commitments to proceed to any ultimate goal or even through all ☐ steps. Finally, it has more political significance in the early stages and more military significance in the later stages; it is, therefore, closer to Soviet interests as opposed to their propaganda position, since it does not infringe on Soviet security at the outset.

9. Nevertheless, an approach of this kind has always been available to the Soviets if they were seriously interested in demonstrating their acceptance of disarmament as a way to relieve tensions. They have consistently refused to move ahead on such a basis because it presumes a political commitment to normalizing relations with the US, without any progress on related political-military questions, such as the German question. Moreover, a gradual approach would leave untouched for some time the important issues which agitate Soviet policy particularly US plans for making nuclear weapons available to the Western Alliance. In addition, it would involve a repudiation of their extensive propaganda investment in a set plan for complete and general disarmament. In general, we

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think that for these reasons the Soviets would rebuff such a plan at this time, unless the associated political agreement covered an important issue. One or more elements of the plan might also have a greater appeal if it were offered as a quick follow-up to take advantage of the political atmosphere after a test ban agreement.

c. European Security: The US makes proposals on European security arrangements involving substantial arms control and disarmament as a major element, particularly in relation to reductions in conventional and tactical nuclear weapons.

10. The Soviet response to almost any European security plan will depend on how it relates to the problem of Germany and the continued American military presence in Europe. Soviet interest will vary with the degree to which a European security plan confirms the division of Germany, deprives Western Germany of any access to nuclear arms, and provides for a reduction in American troops and weaponry in Europe. Since almost any security arrangement is bound to touch at least indirectly on these issues, the Soviets will have a great interest in pursuing such negotiations, if only to raise suspicion and apprehension in the Western Alliance.

11. The present time is probably more propitious for testing Soviet interest in European security arrangements than any other

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since late 1958, when Khrushchev provoked the Berlin crisis. The Soviets apparently see little chance of gaining their objectives by forcing a showdown over Berlin. Instead they have shifted to possible European security arrangements. They recently tabled at Geneva a proposal for a NATO-Warsaw pact nonaggression treaty evidently as an indirect means of securing Western recognition of the division of Germany and Soviet hegemony in East Europe. Moreover, they probably feel that once the general question of European security is opened up for negotiation it can be used as a weapon against plans to strengthen the nuclear and conventional capabilities of NATO.

12. It should be emphasized that in the field of European security involving arms control and disarmament the USSR can afford to go much further than the US because of the prevailing military balance of forces in Europe. Regardless of the character of US initiatives, the Soviets can be expected to respond by proposing withdrawals of foreign troops, and restrictions on deployment of nuclear weapons. Almost any proposals acceptable to Moscow would have to close any loopholes for German acquisition of nuclear weapons. In return the Soviets would have little to offer, except perhaps the assurance that some step toward European security might greatly reduce the chances of a crisis over Berlin. Thus the

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issue might eventually be posed as to whether the US would make important concessions on the larger question of Germany in exchange or a commitment to relax pressure on Berlin.

d. Nuclear Disarmament: The US would make proposals related to the broad problem of halting the further proliferation of nuclear weapons occurring either through acquisition by additional countries or deployment to additional geographic areas and outer space. Among the measures involved would be a test ban, a non-dissemination agreement, a cut-off of fissionable material production, a ban on placing nuclear weapons in space, and creation of denuclearized zones.

13. If there is one aspect of Soviet disarmament policy which is fairly certain, it is that Soviet national interests are not served by the spread of nuclear weapons. The Soviets, however, are caught in a painful dilemma: they seem to recognize that a general test ban would be important in containing the spread of nuclear capabilities; but their military doctrine and actual military posture points to an increasing reliance on a substantial long-range striking force with high yield nuclear warheads, which means they wish to have a free hand to perfect their weaponry through continued testing. This dilemma may account in great

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part for the ambivalent Soviet behavior in the long and dreary test ban negotiations.

14. In our view, the Soviets do not regard the three-power test ban as adequate in itself to prevent the proliferation of nuclear capabilities. Not only can the Soviets not deliver China, but it is most unlikely that France would join an agreement. In the Soviet view, any test ban would not reduce the chances of Germany gaining access to nuclear weapons either from France or through NATO. We think, therefore, that the Soviets have almost concluded that the spread of nuclear weapons to Germany is inevitable unless a test ban is followed or accompanied by a nondissemination agreement.

15. Thus, the Soviets probably now view the test ban primarily as a tension easing device which could lead to other agreements of interest to them. We think the Soviets are holding open the door to agreement on a test ban, until they are firmly convinced that US policy precludes any further agreement affecting the buildup of nuclear strength in NATO. How far the US is willing to go in nuclear arms control in all its various aspects could have a decisive bearing not only on the Moscow talks but on the general course of East-West relations. Denuclearization of Central Europe

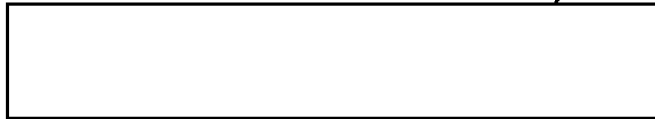
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(e.g., the Rapacki plan), of course, would be of interest as a separate measure and in this connection the Soviets may tie the whole question of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons into the German and Berlin questions.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

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